

ALBA Party Manifesto

UK General Election 2024



ALBA YES to Scottish Independence

Candidate Name

ALBA Party: Yes to Scottish Independence



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A message for the voters of Scotland

On July 4 Scotland goes to the polls in a UK General Election - the ALBA Party believe that every single national election should be used to seek a mandate to begin negotiations for Independence. That means the election itself should provide the popular mandate for Independence.

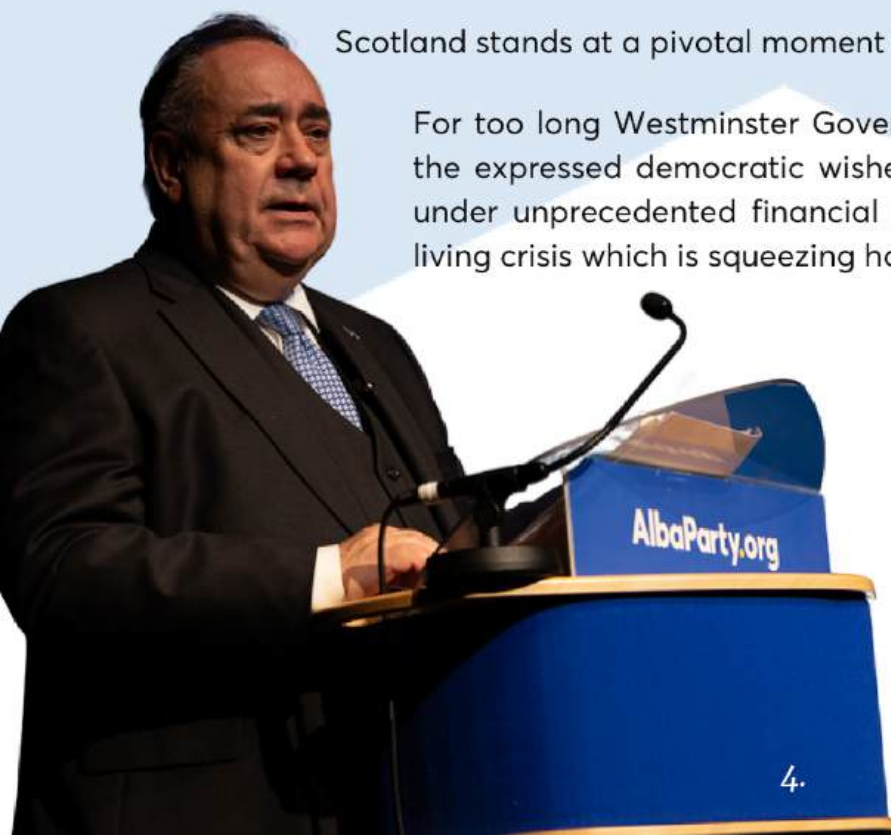
The ALBA Party are clear that it is the Scottish Parliament election in 2026 that remains our strategic priority. In the five years since the last UK election there has been a Global Pandemic, three Prime Ministers and a Cost of Living Crisis. During this period an ill-fated venture to the UK Supreme Court also blocked off the referendum route to independence for now. That is why at this election the ALBA Party seeks to introduce the argument that it will still be at the ballot box that Scotland secures our independence but with each and every election fought on that mandate.

ALBA believe that in 2026 this campaign will sweep the country.

The ALBA Party are standing 19 candidates at the General Election and we have endorsed the independent nationalist Angus B MacNeil in the Na h-Eileanan an Iar Constituency. This manifesto should be read in conjunction with our draft Highlands Manifesto and our ALBA Youth Manifesto.

Scotland stands at a pivotal moment in its history.

For too long Westminster Governments have been allowed to veto the expressed democratic wishes of Scots. Household incomes are under unprecedented financial pressure as families face a cost of living crisis which is squeezing household budgets to breaking point.





This manifesto sets out ALBA's ideas on how we can make life better for all households and for every community. ALBA continues to develop a comprehensive policy platform to meet the modern needs of a modern Scotland.

Taking real action on Independence as an urgent necessity is the top priority of the ALBA Party.

We will also set out our proposals for tackling the cost of living crisis and protecting the rights of women and girls.

Although a General Election concerns reserved matters, we will also set out our proposals on a range of matters that the Scottish Government can take action on now, to ensure that it begins to rebuild its hard-won reputation for competence that was vital to the case for independence presented in 2014, and was one of the key reasons why so much progress was made. In 2026, ALBA will present a cadre of candidates with life experience and knowledge who will represent the adults moving back into the Scottish Parliament room.

Eight separate national elections have come and gone since the referendum of 2014, including two mandates at Holyrood and three Westminster elections, all with an Independence majority. But little or no action has been taken to move the dial on Independence.

We have the opportunity at this Election to make our votes count for independence.

I hope you will take the opportunity to Vote for the ALBA Party to say Yes to Scottish independence on July 4th.

Alex Salmond
Former First Minister





Introducing the Manifesto

ALBA stands for Scotland – quite literally!

But we not only stand for Scotland – we stand up for Scotland and its people at every possible opportunity and many of you can too by voting for ALBA in this Election.

With 7,000 members, and rising, in all parts of Scotland, ALBA activists, Councillors, MPs and our Holyrood Group leader Ash Regan MSP have already been standing up for Scotland.

The more votes that are cast for ALBA, the more action there will be on independence, and the more we can accomplish for Scotland.

A vote for ALBA in this Election is:

A vote for Scottish Independence.

A vote to tackle the cost of living crisis through our targeted five-point plan to address family and child poverty.

A vote to demand that Grangemouth Oil Refinery is saved from closure.

A vote to protect the sex-based rights of women and girls.

A vote to boost ALL household incomes by pushing for reduced fuel bills and a Scottish Triple Lock that will see an extra £1000 a year payment to pensioners compared to the rest of the UK.

A vote to rid Scotland of Weapons of Mass Destruction.

A vote not just to protect our NHS but to ensure it is there for you when you need it, whether that be getting a GP appointment when you need one or access to hospital services where you live.

Only by voting for ALBA can you make any of this happen. That is why, on July 4, you should vote for the ALBA Party: Yes to Scottish Independence.



Taking action on Independence

Independence is ALBA's priority. Independence is not an aspiration for the hereafter but for the HERE and NOW!

The ALBA Party are the only party putting independence on the ballot paper and we are the only party with a strategy to deliver independence.

Without the full powers of independence, Scotland will be locked into the failed economic and social policies of the UK. Regardless of who the next Prime Minister is, both want to spend over £205 Billion on replacing Trident whilst refusing to fund scrapping the Bedroom Tax or lift the two child cap on child benefits.

Despite a renewed mandate for an Independence Referendum in 2021, the will of the people of Scotland, as expressed in that Election, was never implemented.

Indeed, the Scottish Government didn't even formally request the transfer of powers from Westminster, through a Section 30 Order, which was one way to enable that Referendum to take place.

And to make things worse, they then put the matter into the hands of the UK Supreme Court that sits a short walk away from the Palace of Westminster. The result was always going to be in London's favour at the expense of the Scottish people.

The Scottish Government's failed strategy effectively handed the UK Government, and whomever the Prime Minister is, a veto over Scotland's constitutional future. ALBA believes this is unacceptable and that this situation cannot be allowed to continue.

With your support for ALBA in this election it won't!

It's time for Scotland to seize the political initiative from Westminster.

It's time to break the constitutional log-jam.

It's time for Scotland to decide its own future, not Rishi Sunak, not Keir Starmer, not any UK Prime Minister!

That is why the ALBA Party believe that every single national election should be used to seek a mandate to initiate Independence negotiations, not yet another mandate for a referendum. The referendum route is currently blocked, the Westminster Government have continued to refuse a Section 30 order and the ruling by the UK Supreme Court has made holding a determinative referendum without a Section 30 order much more challenging.

When a strategy has failed then the way forward is not to keep repeating the same mistakes using different formulations of words. The task is to find a new strategy to take the country forward.

We believe that the impact ALBA can make at this election, and beyond, will provide the impetus for all independence supporting parties to designate the Scottish election of 2026 as the independence election.

The second, or list, vote at that election will be most suitable to provide the genuine test of such a mandate. Unlike the constituency vote it is not affected by tactical vote considerations but can be viewed as the genuine test of support for independence.

The threshold would be a simple majority of votes cast for all pro-independence parties. However, whatever the stance of the other parties is, ALBA will provide every elector in Scotland at the 2026 election the opportunity to vote our country into independence.

Our target in ALBA is to win at least 15 per cent of the list vote in 2026, electing some 24 MSPs and contributing to both a majority of independence votes to provide a popular mandate and an independence majority in the Parliament to implement that mandate.

And if Westminster continues to say no, then it will be for the Scottish Parliament to mobilise domestic and international pressure to bend Westminster to the will of the Scottish people.

This could include:

- the formation of an Independence Convention encompassing civic Scotland to plan the popular demonstrations of support for independence and act as the steering group for the independence movement.
- the holding of a referendum within the powers of the Scottish Parliament to ask the people whether they wish decisions on independence to be made and legislated for in the Holyrood Chamber.
- securing international support to force through the ICJ, and other organisations, to persuade the Westminster government to accept the independence popular mandate delivered by the Scottish people.

The National Movement has always been greater than one individual or one party, therefore it must be detached from the day-to-day problems that occur within Government. It is by giving the power of the movement back to the grassroots that we stand the greatest chance of restoring our nation's independence.

By taking their parliamentary seats without a plan to use the institution as one plank in an independence strategy, Scotland's MPs are effectively giving tacit agreement to UK control.

On the 13th of July 2022, ALBA MPs took part in a parliamentary intervention to protest the Johnson Government's refusal to acknowledge Scotland's fundamental democratic and national rights.

It is ALBA's position that all independence supporting MPs should similarly intervene in the Westminster Parliament on a daily basis in order to grind all business in that parliament to a halt.

This action should only cease when the UK Government accepts Scotland's national Claim of Right to democratic choice. This is the fundamental Scottish Claim of Right which has been championed by Neale Hanvey in the last Parliament.

The struggle for independence is a political one to be fought and won in Scotland but the ALBA Party see the importance of a sustained campaign to enlist international sympathy and support, paving the way for when recognition would be sought for an independent Scotland.

If we are to have success in garnering international support for our cause, we need to start engaging now with key players in the diplomatic community. Diplomacy has two main components: relationship building and information sharing; and we need to work on both in order to achieve Scotland's goals.

ALBA WILL:

Ensure that every vote cast for the Alba Party counts for Scottish independence.

Introduce the argument that the mandate for independence must be won at a National election through a majority of votes cast and that the list vote in 2026 will provide the earliest and best opportunity to bring this into effect.

Take real action on independence through the establishment of an Independence Convention to mobilise popular opinion behind the Parliament's demand for independence.

Pressure for a referendum to be held by the Scottish Parliament on independence powers to confirm that Scotland wants independence to be legislated for in our own Parliament.

Agitate for international support to respect the right of the Scottish people to self determination.

**That is why on July 4, you should vote for the
ALBA Party: Yes to Scottish Independence.**





The UK Political and Economic Straightjacket

Under continued macro economic management by Westminster, Scotland will be condemned to lower than trend economic growth within a UK state which itself is exhibiting lower than trend growth.

In practical terms, this means that the austerity which has bedevilled public finances and household budgets will continue to prevail for the foreseeable future. As the Institute of Fiscal Studies has ruthlessly exposed, both Labour and Tory are conducting a phoney election with phantom manifesto costings.

Pledges to freeze tax rates across 75 per cent of the revenue gathering tax base merely disguises the fact that both parties are relying on fiscal drift on income tax to increase their revenues in the most unequal way possible. Joint commitments to increase defence spending mean that even the most modest advances in social provision - for example abolition of the bedroom tax - cannot be afforded.

The refusal of Labour (and the Liberal Democrats) to mend economic fences with the European Union condemn the UK to the continuing damage of Brexit to the economic fabric of the country.

Monetary Policy remains the preserve of the "independent" Bank of England who have but one instrument of interest rates to meet their one inflation target. This "one club golfer" approach to monetary policy has cost the Treasury £20 billion per annum plus additional interest charges on gilts. As it happens, this is approximately the sum of public finance generally thought to be necessary to put the National Health Service, and related social services, back on track.

However the real damage from sky high interest rates maintained over the last two years are the tens of thousands of small businesses and millions of households whose finances have been wrecked by borrowing and mortgage costs.

In short, Westminster Government of monetary policy through the Bank of England has made "finance too proud and industry and the people too poor". We would recommend that this monetary stance is changed to see reasonable interest rates as a proper target of economic policy, not a blunt instrument. Returning interest rates to trend position will free up some £20 billion per annum currently wasted in debt servicing costs.

There is nothing, absolutely nothing, on offer from the British political parties which provides an escape route from this low growth, austerity economic prospectus.

The approach of ALBA is entirely different.

We look forward to a Scotland which embraces the next energy revolution. Scotland has the potential to produce, in the foreseeable future, up to ten times our own power requirements from clean green sources and at a cost which is substantially below prevailing market prices. For example, deep offshore wind is the most economic way to produce big power with projected costs now running at around one third of new nuclear investment.

In that prospect there is the means to secure the public finances through a 20 per cent share in every major field, to revitalise the Scottish industrial base by building the vast structures required in deep water Scottish facilities, and to ensure that communities affected by the developments share in the new energy bounty.

Our objective is to sell Scottish power to markets in the south at average prices of development while offering Scottish consumers and Scottish business access to power at marginal cost. Thus, we can both eliminate fuel poverty in our land of energy plenty and provide a key competitive advantage to energy consuming Scottish business.

One of the successes of the SNP government led by Alex Salmond was to transform the efficiency of public capital spend in Scotland through the Scottish Futures Trust. We will review this further for new economic circumstances including the use of Bond finance in major infrastructure projects.

The Scotland ALBA seeks is an independent, prosperous, social democratic society, engaged with our European partners through EFTA and fruitfully engaged with the wider world in the cause of peace and justice.

In this manifesto we sketch out some of ALBA's key campaigns for Westminster government action which would have revenue implications for Scotland and we identify some of our most important initiatives which we will take into the Scottish Parliament campaign in two years' time.

ALBA WILL:

Argue for a new monetary policy in the UK which targets a range of economic objectives and sees interest rates as an objective of policy, not as an instrument of policy.

Present a new economic prospectus for Scotland which seeks a comparative advantage in energy costs to sustain the public finances, household budgets and business costs.





Tackling the cost of living crisis

Scotland is facing a real cost of living crisis, one that cries out for real action from both the UK and the Scottish Governments – action which has been sadly lacking to date.

Inflation hit a 40 year high in October 2022 at 11.1%. Rishi Sunak has campaigned on the "success" of lowering inflation but he's taken no action to lower costs that sky rocketed as a result of the high inflationary rises.

Energy costs are pushing more and more households into fuel poverty across the country and especially in rural and island communities. Scotland is an energy rich land but our people are fuel poor. It is absurd.

According to the latest Scottish Housing Condition Survey, 791,000 households (31% of all households) were estimated to be in fuel poverty, of which 472,000 (18.5% of all households) were in extreme fuel poverty.

Fuel poverty and extreme fuel poverty have a strong association with income, with rates increasing as annual household income decreases. For example 89% of households with an annual income less than £15,000 were in fuel poverty compared to 43% of households earning between £15,000 and £24,999 annually.

Tory welfare policies such as the Bedroom Tax and the Two Child Cap on Child Benefits actively push more children into poverty. The Labour Party want to keep these policies in place.

The ALBA Party will call for their removal. If the UK Government scrapped the bedroom tax it would immediately free up an extra £70 Million for the Scottish Government to spend on other measures to tackle the cost of living crisis.

A typical British worker will at retirement receive a state pension and other benefits worth around 29% of what they had previously been earning. That compares with an average of 63% in other OECD countries, and more than 80% in Italy and the Netherlands.

The ALBA Party want to see state pensions in an independent Scotland coming into line with other European nations over time.

We propose that the triple lock system should be improved which, over a 5 year period, would result in the State Pension in an independent Scotland rising to over £1000 a year more than the expected UK State Pension.

Women Against State Pension Inequality (WASPI) represents a cohort of women born in the 1950s who have been adversely affected by changes to the state pension age. Recognising the injustice faced by these women, an independent Scotland must take proactive steps to address their grievances.

The ALBA Party will pressure the incoming UK Government to immediately compensate WASPI women.

ALBA will act to tackle the cost of living crisis through our targeted five-point plan to address family and child poverty.

Tackling the cost of living crisis

In addition we propose for this coming year a doubling of the winter fuel payment offering 1 million Scottish pensioners, and households with severely disabled children, increased payments of between £100 and £300 to help with heating.

Scotland is awash with natural resources. We produce five times the oil and gas we require and yet every price rise makes us poorer. We can already keep the lights on using renewable electricity alone.

The price of wind or water has not gone up but Westminster prices Scottish electricity on the international price of gas.

Our problem is that our resources are controlled by international capital, London pockets the revenues and Scots pay the bills. That is why we have huge levels of fuel poverty in our land of energy plenty.

To tackle the Cost of Living Crisis the Alba Party will support the following measures:

Establish an annual £500 payment targeted at every low earnings household in Scotland in receipt of council tax reduction. This will benefit half a million households at a cost of £250 million.

A £1000 increase to the State Pension through the Scottish Triple Lock.

Compensation for WASPI women.

The removal of VAT from energy Bills and the reduction of VAT to 10% for next year, saving the average household £2500.

Increasing the Scottish Child Payment to £40 per week for all eligible families. This will benefit 400,000 children across 250,000 households at a cost of £275 million.

Scrapping of the Bedroom Tax and ending the Two Child Benefit Cap

Introducing universal free breakfasts for all nursery, primary and secondary pupils and extend free school meals to all primary and secondary pupils. This will cost £350 million.

Doubling the Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) from £30 to £60 per week for all 16-19 year olds in full-time school or college to help close the poverty related educational attainment gap. This would benefit 30,000 young people at a cost of £23 million.

Guaranteeing free universal access for all children and young people to sport facilities. This could potentially benefit one million young people with a cost (based on a take up rate of 80%) of £206 million - a fraction of the billions lost over time to productivity due to obesity or the hundreds of millions cost to the NHS each year.



Standing up for women and children

ALBA recognises and supports the Equality Act 2010, which protects those with protected characteristics from discrimination. Protected characteristics are - age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

The ALBA Party supports efforts to strengthen clarity in the law to ensure people have the protection they need. The Equality Act protects discrimination due to "sex", and sex is a biological fact.

The Equality Act's single-sex exemptions recognise that single-sex accommodations are required to uphold dignity, safety, and respect in specific settings, such as some jobs and care situations.

The ALBA Party has been at the forefront of championing women's rights and child safeguarding, driven by the actions and words of Ash Regan. We remain steadfast in our opposition to any attempts by either Government to impose gender self-identification in law, policy, and guidance. Our clear position, underpinned by public opinion, is rooted in the profound consequences and implications for society, particularly the risks to the safety, privacy, and dignity of women and girls.

The ALBA Party remains committed to a competent Government and calls on the Scottish Government to learn from its bruising judicial review experience and consult widely on legislation to avoid costly humiliation later in the courts. ALBA believes that the electorate will not forgive Labour and the SNP for any attempt to bring gender self-id into law in Scotland or the UK to appease ideologically driven lobby groups.

ALBA WILL:

Support clarity in law – a woman is an adult human female.

Support the Cass Review's implementation immediately and in full in all areas relevant to Scotland.

Support high-quality, evidence-based care for children and young people.

Ensure health, education, and legislation is Cass Compliant.

Support the Equality Act 2010 protections against discrimination.

Support an independent Scotland to have a Citizen's Assembly on fundamental rights and protections for all, which should be enshrined in a written constitution for the people, by the people.

Oppose any attempt to conflate gender identity with sex-based rights and protections in law, policy and guidance.

Support single-sex spaces and sex-based rights at all levels.

The Alba Party prioritises the rights of women and children in this Election.

That is why we urge you to vote for the Alba Party: Yes to Scottish Independence on July 4.

Together, we can shape an independent future for Scotland, prioritising competence, equality, women's rights, and child safeguarding.







Tackling the Root Cause and Impact of Inequality

The ALBA Party is steadfast in its support for the equality of all citizens. We are committed to ensuring that the fundamental rights of all our people are derived from a Citizens' Assembly and enshrined in a written constitution of an Independent Scotland.

A constitutional base for equality will enhance the drive for equal pay and render injustices, such as that suffered by the WASPI women on pensions, unconstitutional and end discrimination against people with disabilities.

The ALBA Party is not just listening to the people of Scotland, but also taking direct measures to address the impact of inequality.

Our practical solutions include the promotion of Community Hubs within supermarkets with Credit and Claimants Unions, shared transport services, and investment in Community Rehabilitation Services for adults seeking support to recover their lives from the storm of addiction.

We also advocate a locally managed drive to end homelessness and comprehensive community social care using person-centred values, with a Living Wage baseline paid to all employees.

We will tackle root causes by introducing a guaranteed basic income and scaffolding support communities for care leavers to help them achieve independence in adulthood, providing adequate permanent housing, and supporting all care leavers to enter full-time education, employment, or training and not be left behind.

Everyone is entitled to equal treatment by the State and under the law, and with independence, we can expand the ambition of that treatment by ensuring the Government invests the bounty of Scotland's resources in the well-being of our people.

Tackling Racism

Racism's impact in Scotland resonates far beyond its geographical borders. It corrodes the very fabric of our diverse society, fracturing communities, and stunting the potential of countless individuals. Its insidious presence manifests in disparities in education, employment, healthcare, and social opportunities, perpetuating inequality. Scotland, like any nation, must confront this issue head-on, recognising that dismantling racism isn't just a moral imperative but an essential step toward harnessing the full potential of its multiculturalism.

Tackling the Root Cause and Impact of Inequality

To combat racism in Scotland, collective action is crucial. Education is paramount, beginning with anti-racism training in schools, workplaces, and communities.

Fostering dialogue and empathy can break down stereotypes and biases. Encouraging diverse representation in leadership roles and media promotes inclusivity. Establishing strong legislative frameworks to address discrimination sends a powerful message that racism won't be tolerated.

Supporting organisations that champion racial equality and amplifying marginalised voices are also vital steps. Ultimately, it's a commitment from individuals, institutions, and society as a whole to actively challenge racism, creating a Scotland where diversity is not just accepted, but celebrated.

Prison Officer Retirement

ALBA support the Prison Officers Association's campaign to re-instate the retirement age of Prison Officers to 60.

The Alba Party believes that for Scotland to be a fair and equal society requires us to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to take part in all that Scotland has to offer. This includes being a part of our skilled and talented workforce. With the Disability Employment Gap still remaining at unacceptable levels, it's time to deliver long-term solutions that will not only benefit now but will ensure that future generations are enabled to succeed in the workplace.

A Disability National Support Centre

ALBA will create a Disability National Support Centre responsible for providing guidance on reasonable adjustments, accessibility products, and disability mentoring. The mission of the Centre will be to ensure that every disabled person has a single point of contact and access to advice, starting from early learning and working right the way through full time education and into employment.

The National Support Centre will also offer support, advice, and guidance to parents, schools, higher education centres, and employers, ensuring broad, universal, and consistent support for disabled people across all communities, the length and breadth of Scotland, and not just for a select few.

Digital Accessibility Standards

To ensure equal access to the job market, we must ensure that online job portals and recruitment websites are accessible to impaired users. We can't expect a decrease in the employment gap if the people we are trying to support cannot access the same portals as able-bodied applicants.

To make digital access equal to all, we will extend the powers of the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations 2018 to include private organisations and not just public bodies. This will bring the UK closer to European standards and improve digital access for all, not just those accessing recruitment portals, but will widen access to all digital services.





The NHS and Social Care

When Alex Salmond was First Minister he set Scotland on the path towards having the best performing A&E waiting times across the UK. Prescription charges were scrapped meaning that nobody in Scotland had to choose to avoid treatment in fear of the cost.

Health is devolved but decisions made by the UK Government can impact on Scotland's budget and, by default, Scotland's NHS.

The ALBA Party will always support universal entitlement to the NHS free at the point of need. We will oppose Westminster attempts to privatise NHS services that could adversely impact on Scottish funding levels.

Free Personal Care has been available in Scotland for adults aged 65 or over since 2002. In 1999 when the Sutherland Commission recommended introducing free personal care across the UK only Scotland implemented it. The Health Foundation estimated the cost of introducing free personal care in England in 2015/16 at between £3.1bn and £6.7bn, with a central estimate of £4.3bn. Taking account of inflation this would mean a central estimate of £5.7bn today.

ALBA believe that due to the fiscal constraints of devolution, Scotland does not benefit from the macro economic benefits of investing more in social care. Therefore, ALBA will pressure an incoming Labour Government to follow Scotland's Free Personal Care model which would result in circa £500 Million of additional consequential coming to the Scottish budget.

Across Scotland many people are concerned that they are unable to make an appointment with their doctor and often spend time in a queue, only to be told there are no appointments left and to try again the following day.

The number of registered patients in Scotland has increased by 2.1% over the past two years and Scotland's population is continuing to age, with a 50% increase in over-60s projected by 2033.

The Scottish Government is not on track to meet its commitment of 800 new GPs by 2027, having added only 271 in the past six years.

ALBA will ensure that an increase in funding will be dedicated to increasing the number of GPs to meet the target of a further 500 required by 2027, and in the NHS to training and recruiting to increase the number of Advanced Nursing Practitioners in the Scottish NHS to 1000.

The present Scottish Government has allowed a new crisis in NHS dentistry to emerge. The expansion in NHS dentistry allowed by the opening of the new dental school in Aberdeen has been dissipated and we are now back to square one with many people, particularly in rural Scotland, finding it impossible to access public dental care.

There were 3,396 registered NHS dentists in March 2010. The number grew to a high of 3,735 in September 2019. In the three years September 2019 – September 2022, the number has dropped back to 3,438, the lowest number since 2011.

ALBA will open a new graduate school of dentistry in the HIU Inverness campus building through its work in the Scottish Graduate Entry Medicine Programme (ScotGEM). This will be backed up by Scotland wide incentives for dental graduates to commit to the NHS.

ALBA WILL:

Support universal entitlement to the NHS free at the point of need.

Work to increase Scotland's Advanced Nursing Practitioners to 1000 in the Scottish NHS.

Prioritise measures to get Scotland back on target to achieve 500 new GPs by 2027.

Call for free personal care in England at the same level as delivered in Scotland.

Open a new graduate school of dentistry in the HIU campus in Inverness.





An Alba Revolution in Housing

The reprehensible and totally unjustified SNP cut in the Scottish housing budget to satisfy Green Party demands on "active travel" has condemned more people in Scotland to spend more time without an acceptable standard of a safe and secure home.

The Scottish Parliament has declared a "housing emergency" but doesn't have either the imagination or the means to address the crisis. ALBA has the first and we can call into existence the second.

We are impressed with the ideas of former Infrastructure Secretary, Alex Neil, who has proposed a target to construct 200,000 house of all tenures over the next five years, the majority of which will go to social rent. This will take us 1/3 of the way to meeting the Homes For Scotland estimate of the shortfall which is 600,000. The full target will therefore be met over a 15 year timescale or three terms of the Scottish Parliament.

ALBA propose the immediate reversal of the £200 million cut to the housing budget in the December 2023 Budget and bringing substantially more land into housing availability to reduce the cost. Councils and Housing Associations will be encouraged to build houses for sale but with the explicit purpose of increasing socially rented stock. We will intervene where necessary when Housing Associations act like private corporations and designate housing for demolition as opposed to imaginative renovation.

The Wheatley Group's deplorable treatment of the Wyndford residents in Glasgow is a case in point which requires public action to reintroduce public accountability. More generally we will give statutory protection and rights to properly designated local tenants organisations.

An Alba Revolution in Housing

ALBA propose to mobilise £20 billion of available pension fund capital to build 100,000 houses for rent. The lack of action to meet housing demand by matching it with available capital is a major failing of the civil service which requires to be tackled.

In order to meet this surge in supply of housing we will require a minimum expansion of the skilled construction labour force by around 50,000 and we will work with the Construction Industry Training Board, colleges, companies and the unions to bring this about.

An ALBA influenced administration will compulsory purchase the sites of ruined cottages around rural Scotland and gap sites in towns and cities, take them through planning permission for houses built to appropriate style and offer them to first time buyers and young householders as sites with planning permission to facilitate people's entry onto the housing ladder.

Finally to oversee this revolution in Scottish housing provision, ALBA will argue for a dedicated Cabinet Minister Secretary responsible for the policy.

ALBA WILL:

Establish the target to build 200,000 houses in the five year term of the Parliament.

Expand the skilled construction workforce by some 50,000.

Take powers to ensure Housing Associations fulfil their fundamental purpose.

Appoint a Cabinet Secretary for Housing to be responsible for the Housing Revolution.





Saving Grangemouth and the future of the North Sea

The ALBA Party are deeply concerned about the announcement by Petroineos in November 2023 to begin a transition project which could end oil refining at its Grangemouth complex as early as 2025.

The closing of the refinery threatens the jobs of 500 employees and 2,000 contractors at the plant and could have a potentially devastating impact on the local population, businesses and communities, as well as the economic and social fabric of central Scotland. The multiplier impact of a Grangemouth closure would cost many thousands of skilled jobs across the Scottish economy.

ALBA understand the effect this would have on other key industrial sectors such as plastics and chemicals, is mindful that Grangemouth provides around 70% of the nation's fuel at petrol stations and that it is also the primary supplier of aviation fuel for Scotland's airports.

The ALBA Party wholeheartedly support the workers at Grangemouth and the work of Unite the Union in defending jobs dependent on the refinery. At Westminster, the Alba Party's Depute leader Kenny MacAskill has spearheaded the campaign to Save Grangemouth.

We believe that that the perilous position of Grangemouth makes the case for independence and control of our own resources.

We are an energy rich land but our people live in fuel poverty. If the Grangemouth Oil Refinery closes Scotland will become the only top 25 oil producer in the world without a refinery capacity, showing there is a clear need to have Scotland's oil refinery to be aligned with Scotland's oil production.

Saving Grangemouth and the future of the North Sea

There must be steps taken to ensure that oil from the Forties pipeline, accounting for 40% of all oil production in the North Sea last year, which is piped to Grangemouth is actually refined there, as well as refining the oil from any new licenced fields such as Rosebank.

Last year's GERS figures showed that North Sea Oil and Gas Revenues were a record high for Scotland with £9.4 billion raised in the past financial year. It would be criminally insane to sacrifice such an overwhelming bounty for Scotland when Scotland's Oil & Gas can be the engine room of an independent Scotland and the resource which is used to fund the development of a Net Zero future.

The Alba Party want to see new fields licensed with a condition for them to be a zero carbon development and this can be achieved by a field by field commitment to carbon capture - a technology ALBA believe Scotland could be the world leader in if the UK Government invested a fraction of oil revenues for a "rapid development of a carbon capture network." It should be a license condition of every new development that they invest in the emerging carbon capture network.

In contrast, the Conservatives see Scottish resources as a cash cow for their tax incentives for the wealthy, Labour's plan to end investment allowances will have a devastating impact on jobs and new investment while the SNP have lost all credibility with their ever changing stance on development. To sustain employment at serious levels the North Sea requires exploration, development and production.

ALBA WILL:

Fight to Save Grangemouth from closure.

Support a sustainable future for North Sea Oil and Gas workers.

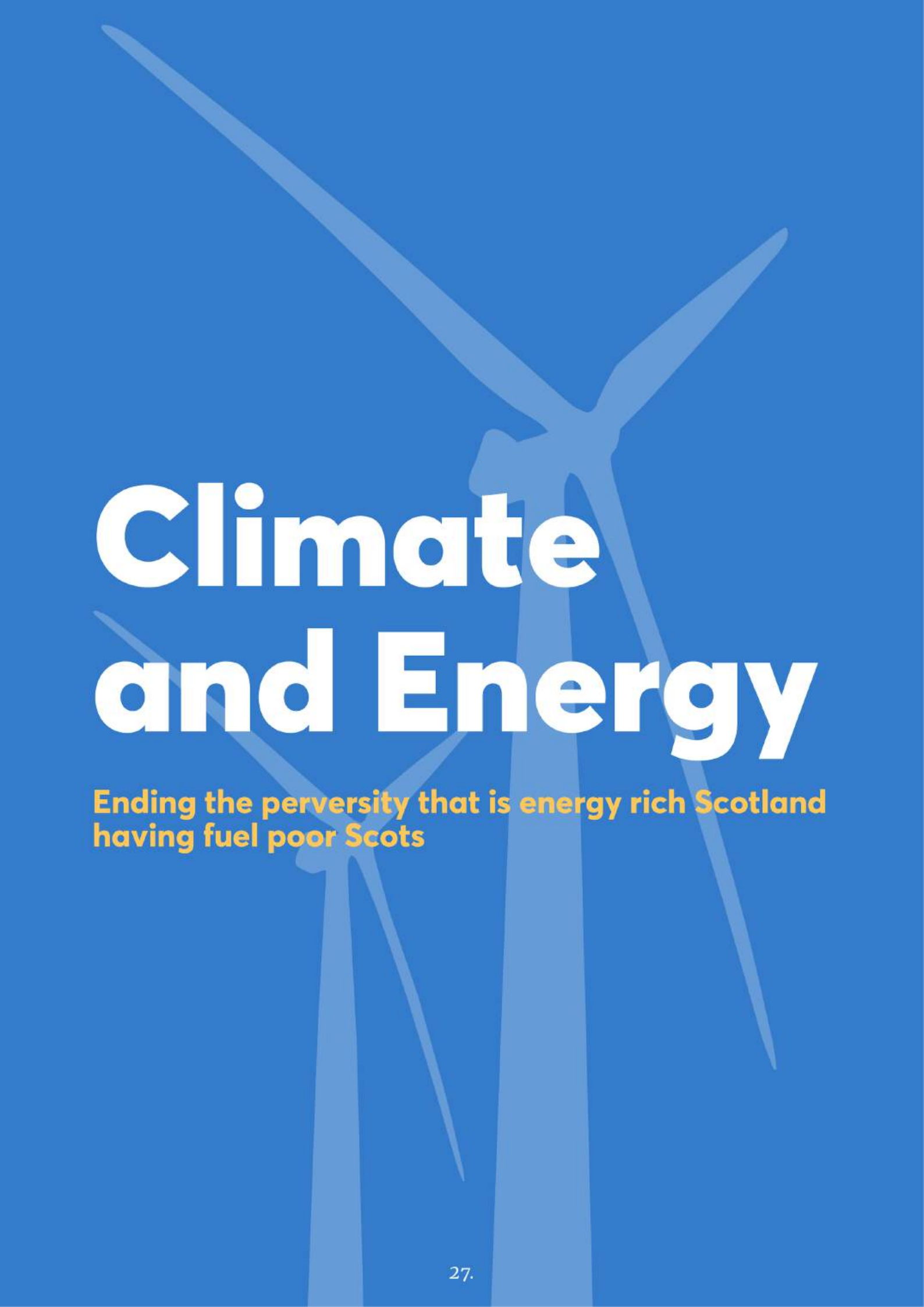
Support new Oil & Gas licences with carbon neutral requirements placed on them secured by private and public carbon capture investment.

Oppose the SNP and Labour stance on the future of the North Sea that could cost over 100,000 jobs direct and indirect across the UK.



“Scotland MUST retain a refinery capacity for Scotland's oil”

Kenny MacAskill MP



Climate and Energy

**Ending the perversity that is energy rich Scotland
having fuel poor Scots**

Scotland is renowned for its energy wealth. Scotland was the oil and gas capital of Europe and now it has the potential to be a world leader in the renewable sector. It is important both for our people and the climate that we have full control over this sector and our resources.

ALBA believe that the Scottish Government should immediately form a public energy company to serve the best interests of the people of Scotland. Alba Energy - The Power of Scotland, would have a public share in our vast offshore wind wealth ensuring that the profits of Scotland's renewable energy benefit the people of Scotland. Therefore we believe that there should be a minimum 20 per cent public share in all offshore wind energy projects as of right and that share will be administered by Alba Energy.

Ten years after the Better Together coalition told the people that there was no value in the hydrocarbons left in the waters around Scotland, the UK Government has licenced the Rosebank field with a recoverable oil and gas value of some £30 billion.

We believe in the continuation of North Sea Oil on the condition that all new oil and gas licences should require a specific field commitment of a zero net carbon footprint achieved largely by investment in the developing carbon capture network.

It is vital that the people of Scotland feel the benefits of our great natural wealth.

This can be achieved by carbon capture - a technology Scotland could still be the world leader in if the UK Government would at last put its money where its mouth is and return a bare fraction of oil revenues for a rapid development of a carbon capture network. Successive UK Governments since 2005 have betrayed North Sea workers by dragging their feet on carbon capture.

ALBA call for the immediate speedy deployment of Carbon Capture technology to make Scotland a world leader in the field and to contribute substantially to all of Europe's Net Zero aspirations.

Without independence and a coherent energy policy, the Scottish people will yet again be deprived of any share whatsoever in our vast energy resources and the national scandal of fuel poverty amid energy plenty will be allowed to continue.

ALBA WILL:

Support the establishment of a national energy company - Alba Energy - the Power of Scotland with a public stake in all offshore wind projects.

Support the licensing of new oil and gas developments with world leading net zero license conditions.

Champion Carbon Capture technology as an integral part of a credible transition.



EFTA, Single Market & Immigration

The ALBA Party is a pro-immigration party, that recognises the tremendous contribution that New Scots, who decide to make Scotland their home, make to wider society. This has been demonstrated by our continued support for safe and legal routes for refugees and asylum seekers and our opposition to the UK Government's inhumane asylum policy.

The ALBA Party's stance on immigration has two primary drivers: firstly that we believe Scotland needs to welcome more migrants to help sustain public services as we have a declining population; and secondly to align to our position that an independent Scotland should seek immediate membership of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) leading to access to the European Economic Area and the Single Market.

Member states' citizens enjoy freedom of movement in each other's territories in accordance with the EFTA convention.

EFTA nationals also enjoy freedom of movement in the European Union (EU). Currently, in practice, EFTA nationals and EU citizens are not only visa-exempt but are legally entitled to enter and reside in each other's countries.

As a result, de facto, a citizen of an EFTA country can live and work in all the other EFTA countries and in all the EU countries, and a citizen of an EU country can live and work in all the EFTA countries. ALBA believe that Scottish citizens should enjoy this right and that citizens of all EFTA and EU countries should be free to come to live and work in Scotland.

The Windsor House Agreement, which allows for Northern Ireland to be both member of the European Single Market and part of the UK, provides a framework for how an independent Scotland can be members of EFTA but still retain an open land border with the remainder of the UK.

Successfully negotiated, an independent Scotland's membership of EFTA and the EEA accompanied by an agreement similar to Northern Ireland will result in a 5 per cent boost to Scottish GDP.

ALBA WILL:

Support pro immigration policies that help people come to live in and contribute to Scotland.

Advocate membership of EFTA which will allow Scottish citizens to enjoy the benefits of freedom of movement and for Scotland to rejoin the European single marketplace.



Education

Students in tertiary education in Scotland are getting a bad deal. Despite the landmark achievement of the abolishment of Tuition fees, implemented by the Alba Party Leader, Alex Salmond, many students still face economic hardship which has been exacerbated by the current Cost of Living Crisis.

Students have been largely excluded from most targeted student support. The Alba Party believes that there is an urgent need to rectify this wrong and more needs to be done to support students in Scotland.

Student loan payments have remained stagnant for too long and the income bands that determine the amount of money a student receives are no longer fit for purpose. Adequate support needs to be put into place to assist the next generation of Nurses, Doctors and Teachers receive a good education.

ALBA will champion Scotland's students. Adequate support is vital to ensure the next generation are able to receive a good education.

The ALBA Party support free tuition in Scotland as established by Alex Salmond. As a result of free education Scotland has one of the highest higher education and university participation rates in the whole of Europe.

We believe that Scotland should control and expand the entry of overseas students into our higher education sector. In addition these skilled young people should be encouraged to live and work in Scotland, at least for a period after graduation.

Although Scottish entries into university have been rapidly expanding overall, the Governments that followed Alex Salmond introduced unreasonable caps in key subject areas. These should now be lifted and an agreement secured with the University and College sector that every qualified student should be offered a place.

ALBA believes that there should be a national bursary scheme for working class youngsters without the requisite formal qualifications, but who have graduated through the Saltire awards or other schemes recognising voluntary work, to enrol in our top universities after a summer foundation course.

We will call on an incoming UK Government to scrap tuition fees for students in England. We estimate the policy would cost £10 Billion meaning Scotland's block grant would be increased £1 Billion if the UK Government made direct payments to English Universities.

The aftermath of Covid has brought into sharp relief many of the difficulties in our education system with discipline, child and teacher stress, exclusions and teacher safety. ALBA propose a standing Scottish Education Commission to re-examine our way forward in Scottish education building on the professionalism of our teachers. We are achieving great success in examination and career outcomes for young people. It will be the task of the Scottish Education Commission to herald these successes, tackle our difficulties and secure international acknowledgement for the achievements of our educators and young people.

In terms of additional funding in both education and health, ALBA proposes an increase in the Digital Services Tax (DST) to 10 per cent of online transactions. As the only effective tax on the tech giants, it can be expected to raise some £250 million per annum in Scotland. These revenues will be hypothecated to children's support in education and on to access to child mental health services within the Health Budget.

ALBA believe that the recent focus on closing the attainment gap in Scotland has failed to adequately understand that the attainment gap is driven by poverty. Further, it is well established that when children receive a nutritious meal at school it helps create a better learning environment. ALBA have consistently called for the roll out of universal entitlement to free school meals for all nursery, primary and secondary school pupils to build on the policy of free school meals that was first introduced by Alex Salmond a decade ago.

ALBA WILL:

Establish a standing Scottish Education Commission.

Support free tuition in Scotland.

Secure an Agreement with Universities and Colleges that all qualified Scottish-domiciled students will be offered a suitable place.

Call on the next UK Government to scrap tuition fees in England which would result in an increase of £1Billion to the Scottish Budget in consequential.

Support the introduction of universal free breakfasts for all nursery, primary and secondary pupils and extend free school meals to all primary and secondary pupils.



International relations and Defence

The ALBA Party believes that Scotland can be a force for peace in the world.

International relations are vital to understanding and cooperation. It opens doors to trade, cultural exchange, and collective action on global challenges. Strong, respectful international ties enrich our nation, foster peace, and ensure Scotland's voice is heard and valued on the world stage.

ALBA believe that the Defence and Security of an independent Scotland should be underpinned not only by the principle of defending Scotland but also by being a nation that supports the peaceful common good of the world. We are attracted by the defence posture of the Irish Republic, outwith the NATO command structure but operating in partnership with Western allies.

The Defence footprint in Scotland is of massive value and strategic importance and the size, format and capability of the Scottish Defence Force would be primarily based on naval forces and coastal defence for the following reasons: the size of Territorial waters and EEZ; the impact of climate change on the opening of new sea routes with the melting of ice caps in the Arctic Ocean; the need to patrol and enforce Scottish Fishing rights, and the need to protect offshore assets in both hydrocarbons and renewables.

The ALBA Party is opposed to Nuclear Weapons. We will demand that the incoming UK Government scraps the £205 Billion renewal of Trident.

We will advocate for the UK Government to immediately sign, and for the Government of an independent Scotland to sign, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and will campaign for other nations of the world to do so.

There is a long-standing national consensus in existence that Scotland should not host nuclear weapons and the ALBA Party demand that the negotiating position for an independent Scotland will be to secure the speedy and safe removal of the nuclear fleet from Faslane, which will be replaced by conventional naval forces; all weapons of mass destruction and all associated nuclear materials negotiated to be safely removed by day one of Scotland becoming an independent nation.

The ALBA Party recognises Scotland has a proud army tradition and therefore believes an independent Scotland should reinstate historic units disbanded by the UK Government such as the Royal Scots, The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, and Black Watch Regiments and battalions as part of the Scottish Defence force structure.

Alex Salmond was the first political leader in the UK to call for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza. ALBA will continue to use our voices to demand that Israel ceases its unlawful war against Palestine and to seek a peaceful, lasting settlement.

ALBA supports the endeavours of the International Criminal Court prosecutors to serve warrants on those on both sides of the conflict for alleged war crimes against civilians.

ALBA supports the efforts of the Secretary General of the United Nations and the government of Türkiye and others to bring about de-escalation and a negotiated peaceful settlement of the European War provoked by the Russian invasion of Ukraine.



ALBA WILL:

Call for the renewal of Trident to be scrapped.

Support an independent Scotland being free of nuclear weapons from day one of independence.

Continue to call for an immediate ceasefire and lasting peaceful settlement between Israel and Palestine.



Connecting Scotland

The ALBA Party recognises that road infrastructure in Scotland is in deplorable condition and needs to be brought up to 21st century standards. This is particularly true of rural Scotland.

Fixing the roads has reached crisis point and requires national action to assist local authorities. When finances are under pressure local authorities often sideline maintenance budgets, which has the effect of passing on the cost of vehicle damage to the driver and insurance companies.

There is also a major safety issue on the condition of Scotland's roads. Road defects, especially potholes, have been blamed for 15 deaths and over 700 injuries over the last ten years according to figures obtained from Police Scotland.

The amounts estimated to be paid in compensation now runs to millions, while the estimate for fixing the backlog on current costings is £1.3 billion.

However there are solutions. Modern technology can reduce the costs of repair by up to 80 percent.

Spray injection machines, such as the Roadmaster, can be used, as can a range of new more water resistant material for relaying roads.

ALBA propose a national pothole task force, which local authorities can bid into for a fraction of the price of normal procedures. The contracts will be long term, not short term, the machinery and materials will sharply reduce costs and within 5 years the backlog will have been tackled and solved.

The North Coast 500 is particularly significant as it carries a large volume of tourist traffic, which is vital to the economy of the area. Around 40 per cent of the North Coast 500 is single-track and as the tourists enjoy the beautiful scenery there are serious problems caused by the disruption to local people going about their daily business.

Trunk roads in the Highlands are vital routes for trade, commerce and tourism. The A9, A96 and A82 are the main arteries that are used by the large trucks carrying goods into the Highlands. There are also a lot of lorries carrying timber and oversized loads being transported to the wind farms on the roads in the north.

We believe that the dualling of the A9 and A96 is long overdue and that the Scottish Government who have failed lamentably to keep their previous commitments can ensure that the projects are delivered on target. The SNP are entitled to no support north of the Highland line until these commitments made are properly redeemed.

Alba believe that the Scottish Government's support for a third runway at Heathrow airport has not been matched with tangible economic benefits to Scotland. Alba will oppose a third runway at Heathrow Airport and instead lobby for investment in Glasgow, Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Inverness Airports to ensure that Scotland is competitive with comparable European cities.

We recognise that many people in Scotland require to use cross border rail services and the level of service is all too often unacceptable for people in Scotland. We will advocate that the UK Government ends the current franchises and brings cross border rail services back into public ownership.

ALBA WILL:

Demand an increase to Scotland's capital budget to bring forward the targeted completion of the duelling of the A9.

Establish a National Pot Hole Taskforce to eliminate the repair backlog over five years.

Oppose a third runway at Heathrow airport and instead advocate for expansion of Scottish services.

Support public ownership of cross border rail services.

Summary of ALBA's pledges

On independence Alba will:

Ensure that every vote cast for Alba Party counts for Scottish independence.

Take real action on Independence through the establishment of an Independence Convention.

Pressure for a referendum to be held by the Scottish Parliament on independence powers.

Agitate for international support to respect the right of the Scottish people to self-determination.

On the cost of living crisis Alba will:

Establish an annual £500 payment targeted at every low earnings household in Scotland in receipt of council tax reduction. This will benefit half a million households at a cost of £250 million.

A £1000 increase to the State Pension through the Scottish Triple Lock.

Compensation for WASPI women.

The removal of VAT from energy Bills and the reduction of VAT to 10% for next year saving the average household £2500.

Increasing the Scottish Child Payment to £40 per week for all eligible families. This will benefit 400,000 children across 250,000 households at a cost of £275 million.

Introducing universal free breakfasts for all nursery, primary and secondary pupils and extend free school meals to all primary and secondary pupils. This will cost £350 million.

Doubling the Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) from £30 to £60 per week for all 16-19 year olds in full time school or college to help close the poverty related educational attainment gap. This would benefit 30,000 young people at a cost of £23 million.

Guaranteeing free universal access for all children and young people to sport facilities. This could potentially benefit one million young people with a cost (based on a take up rate of 80%) of £206 million - a fraction of the billions lost over time to productivity due to obesity or the hundreds of millions cost to the NHS each year.

Support the scrapping of the Bedroom Tax and ending the Two Child Benefit Cap.

On standing up for women and girls Alba will:

Support the sex-based rights of women and girls at a local level.

Say, without hesitation, that a women is an adult human female.

Support changes to the equality act that make clear that in regards to protection from sex based discrimination, sex means biological sex.

On the NHS and Social Care Alba will:

Support universal entitlement to the NHS free at the point of need.

Work to increase Scotland's Advanced Nursing Practitioners to 1000 in the Scottish NHS.

Prioritise measures to get Scotland back on target to achieve 500 new GPs by 2027.

Call for free personal care in England at the same level as delivered in Scotland.

**On Grangemouth and the North Sea
Alba will:**

Fight to Save Grangemouth from closure.

Support a bright future for North Sea Oil and Gas workers.

Support new Oil & Gas licences with carbon neutral requirements placed on them.

Oppose the SNP and Labour stance on the future of the North Sea that will cost over 100,000 jobs.

On immigration Alba will:

Support pro immigration policies that help people come to live in and contribute to Scotland.

Advocate membership of EFTA which will allow Scottish citizens to enjoy the benefits of freedom of movement and for Scotland to rejoin the European single marketplace.

On Climate and Energy Alba will:

Support the establishment of a national energy company with a public stake in all offshore wind projects.

Support the licensing of new oil and gas developments with world leading net zero license conditions.

Champion Carbon Capture technology as an integral part of a credible transition.

On Education Alba will:

Support free tuition in Scotland.

Ensure that all qualified Scottish domiciled applicants are allocated University and College places.

Call on the next UK Government to scrap tuition fees in England which would result in an increase of £1 Billion to the Scottish Budget in consequentials.

**On Defence and international relations
Alba will:**

Call for the renewal of Trident to be scrapped.

Support an independent Scotland being free of nuclear weapons from day one of independence.

Continue to call for an immediate ceasefire and lasting peaceful settlement between Israel and Palestine.

On Transport Alba will:

Demand an increase to Scotland's capital budget to bring forward the targeted completion of the duelling of the A9.

Oppose a third runway at Heathrow airport and instead advocate for expansion of Scottish services.

Support public ownership of cross border rail services.

It's time for action

ALBA has issued a clear "call to action" in this Election.

If you want Scottish independence, only one party is putting independence on the ballot paper.

Every vote for Alba Party is a vote for Scottish independence.

ALBA SAY

It's time to take real action to help families and support household incomes during the cost of living crisis.

It's time to stand up and fight to save Grangemouth from closure.

It's time to stand with the workers of the North Sea and show them there is a party that will consistently support their livelihoods.

It's time to realise the renewable potential of Scotland and make it work for the Scottish people as well as for the future of the planet.

It's time to stand up for women and girls - to protect their sex-based rights, which have been hard fought for, over many decades.

It's time to take action on independence and to introduce now that elections, and voting for independence at the ballot box, is the way to do that.

Alba Party are the advocates of Real Change which Scotland needs at this election.

It's time for independence.

It's time to Vote Alba Party: Yes to Scottish Independence.

